

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-07 DHA-02 /080 W  
-----039444 132234Z /65

R 131747Z JUL 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BONN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9799  
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
USMISSION USBERLIN  
USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 11582

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOB, WB, UK, UR, VS, FR  
SUBJECT: RUDOLF HESS: APPEAL BY THE FRG CATHOLIC  
AND PROTESTANT CHURCHES

1. ON JUNE 22 THE HEADS OF THE PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC  
CHURCHES IN THE FRG JOINTLY SENT IDENTICAL LETTERS VIA  
THE EMBASSIES IN BONN TO THE HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERN-  
MENT OF THE US, USSR, UK, AND FRANCE, APPEALING FOR  
THE RELEASE OF RUDOLF HESS FROM SPANDAU PRISON ON  
HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS. AMEMBASSY BONN POUCHED THE  
ORIGINAL OF THE LETTER ADDRESSED TO PRESIDENT CARTER  
TO EUR/CE (GEORGE CHESTER) ON JULY 7.

2. AN INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF THE LETTER READS AS  
FOLLOWS:  
BEGIN TEXT  
COLOGNE/STUTTGART, JUNE 22, 1977  
THE CHAIRMAN OF THE GERMAN BISHOPS CONFERENCE  
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EINTRACHTSTRASSE 164  
5000 COLOGNE  
THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH  
IN GERMANY, GEROKSTRASSE 49  
7000 STUTTGART 1  
TO HIS EXCELLENCY  
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

MR. JAMES EARL CARTER

WASHINGTON

EXCELLENCY,

WE TURN TO YOU WITH THE REQUEST THAT HESS,  
THE PRISONER IN THE ALLIED MILITARY PRISON IN  
BERLIN-SPANDAU, BE PARDONED.

RUDOLF HESS WAS SENTENCED BY THE INTERNATIONAL  
MILITARY TRIBUNAL IN NUREMBERG IN 1946 TO LIFE IM-  
PRISONMENT. HE IS NOW 83 YEARS OLD. THE PURPOSE OF  
THE SENTENCE WOULD NOT BE FACILITATED ANYMORE BY HIS  
CONTINUANCE IN CUSTODY. HIS RELEASE WOULD NOT CON-  
STITUTE A DANGER TO ANYONE. FURTHERMORE, A POLITICAL  
MISINTERPRETATION OF THIS ACT OF MERCY IS PRACTICALLY  
IMPOSSIBLE.

FOR THE SAKE OF HUMANITY AND UNDERSTANDING  
(VERSTAENDIGUNG) BETWEEN OUR NATIONS, WE REQUEST THAT  
YOU REMIT THE FURTHER IMPRISONMENT OF RUDOLF HESS,  
SO THAT HE CAN SPEND THE REMAINING DAYS OF HIS LIFE  
WITH HIS FAMILY.

PERMIT US, EXCELLENCY, TO ASSURE YOU OF OUR  
HIGHEST REGARDS.

/S/ JOSEPH CARDINAL HOFFNER,

/S/ DR. HELMUT CLASS, STATE BISHOP

END TEXT

3. AT A TRIPARTITE BONN GROUP MEETING ON JULY 11,  
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IT WAS AGREED TO RECOMMEND THAT REPLIES BE MADE IN  
IN CAPITALS ALONG ESSENTIALLY THE SAME LINES. THE  
BRITISH REP (HARPER) WILL RECOMMEND A RESPONSE WHICH  
GIVES, FOR EXAMPLE, THE EXACT DATE OF THE LATEST  
BRITISH APPROACH TO THE SOVIETS ON HESS (APRIL 29),  
BUT IS OTHERWISE NOT SUBSTANTIALLY DIFFERENT FROM THE  
RECOMMENDED REPLY IN PARAGRAPH 5 INFRA.

4. WHILE THE EMBASSY CUSTOMARILY RESPONDS TO ROUTINE  
CORRESPONDENCE REGARDING HESS ADDRESSED TO THE  
PRESIDENT, WE RECOMMEND THAT IN VIEW OF THE POSITIONS  
OF THE AUTHORS OF THE LETTER A REPLY BE SIGNED AT AN  
APPROPRIATELY HIGH LEVEL IN WASHINGTON.

5. FOLLOWING ARE THE SUBSTANTIVE PORTIONS OF THE  
SUGGESTED US REPLY:

BEGIN TEXT:

THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS REPEATEDLY EX-  
PRESSED THE VIEW THAT RUDOLF HESS SHOULD BE RELEASED  
ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS, AS HAVE THE GOVERNMENTS OF  
FRANCE AND THE UNITED KINGDOM. HOWEVER, MR. HESS IS  
IMPRISONED UNDER THE TERMS OF FOUR-POWER AGREEMENTS,

AND HIS RELEASE WOULD REQUIRE UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT.  
THE WESTERN ALLIES HAVE APPROACHED THE SOVIETS ON  
NUMEROUS OCCASIONS, MOST RECENTLY THIS YEAR, BUTH THE  
RESPONSE HAS IN EACH CASE BEEN NEGATIVE.

I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL  
CONTINUE TO WORK TO SECURE THE RELEASE OF MR. HESS  
AND WILL TAKE ALL APPROPRIATE MEASURES TO ENSURE THAT  
THE CONDITIONS OF HIS IMPRISONMENT ARE ALLEVIATED TO  
THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE.

END TEXT

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** CATHOLICS, PROTESTANTS, POW, HUMAN RIGHTS, PRISONERS RELEASE  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Sent Date:** 13-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Date:** 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1977BONN11582  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
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**Executive Order:** GS  
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**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D770249-1189  
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**Litigation History:**  
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**Message ID:** 2704586c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
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**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 1882298  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** RUDOLF HESS: APPEAL BY THE FRG CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT CHURCHES  
**TAGS:** PFOR, WB, UK, UR, VS, FR, GE  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/2704586c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
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